

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS – PLYMOUTH DISTRICT
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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PRESS RELEASE

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BROCKTON, MA- Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz announced today that the Supreme Judicial Court has affirmed the conviction of Michael Riley for the first degree murder of his four-year-old daughter Rebecca Riley in Hull, Massachusetts on December 13, 2006.

Michael Riley was convicted on March 26, 2010. The evidence at trial showed that he, along with Carolyn Riley, Rebecca's mother, engaged in a scheme to secure social security disability benefits for their children based on false psychiatric symptoms. The Rileys obtained powerful psychiatric medications that they routinely used to abuse Rebecca forcing her to sleep for the better part of every day. They used the medications to murder her, overdosing her, because she was keeping them up at night when she had a bad cold.

The jury convicted Michael Riley of first degree murder based on extreme atrocity or cruelty. Carolyn Riley was convicted of second degree murder at an earlier trial.

On appeal, the defendant principally claimed that admission of some of the forensic evidence supporting the conviction was mishandled by the trial judge. He also claimed that evidence that of his mistreatment of his other two children, in Rebecca's presence, should not have been admitted.

The Supreme Judicial Court rejected those arguments, finding instead that the forensic evidence was properly admitted as was evidence of all the facts and circumstances surrounding Michael Riley's misbehavior toward Rebecca during her short life.

District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz stated, "the murder of this little girl, was senseless and heartbreaking, even more so because it was by the evil acts of her own parents, the very people charged with her care and protection. The verdict of murder in the first degree is just and appropriate, as is its affirmance by the Supreme Judicial Court."

The case was investigated by Trooper Anna Brookes and the Hull Police Department.

The case was prosecuted by First Assistant District Attorney Frank Middleton and former Assistant District Attorney Heather Bradley. On appeal, the Commonwealth was represented by Assistant District Attorney Gail McKenna.

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